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Individual Highlights:

Complaint Process	2
New Licensees	3
Test Your Ethics	4
Sunset Review	5
Compassion Fatigue	6

Upcoming State

Holiday's

October 13, 2003
November 11, 2003
November 27, 2003
December 25, 2003
January 1, 2004

The Board Office will be closed on these days.

View From The Chair



By Marsha Hobbs, LCSW

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work"

Thomas Edison

Greetings from your licensing Board. My term as Chair will end in just a few months. It has been illuminating and challenging. I want to encourage those of you who have the time to consider sharing your expertise via service on the Board when the opportunity arises. Serving as a regulator has increased my awareness in many areas and added new dimension and depth to my professional lens. I will leave with a heightened level of sensitivity to public protection, continuing competency issues, and the legislative process.

Your Board, after much lively discussion, has agreed to a number of proposed changes to the social work regulations. These were presented to the Sunset Committee on August 7th (for details see page 5, [Our Sunset Review](#)). I would like to thank the Board members

for their dedication to this onerous and time intensive undertaking. Please email us regarding your thoughts on these proposed changes.

The topic of regulating continuing competence was not addressed in the aforementioned proposal even though it is one of the responsibilities charged to the Board. The topic is very much in the forefront at the National level with consumer groups and will not and should not disappear. Let's take this OPPORTUNITY to adopt a proactive stance and LEAD the Nation in innovative ways to regulate continuing professional competence. I do understand that it is a very complex issue and will require a lot of teamwork to reach agreement on a fair and economical/feasible solution.

Jason Cowart and I attended a National Summit for regulatory Boards on the topic of continuing professional competence in July. It was sponsored by The Citizen's Advocacy Center as a step toward developing model legislation. Many professional were

represented. Much of the discussion was focused on a global definition and strategies to overcome legal, cultural, administrative, political, and economic barriers to regulation. Many professions were represented.

According to the pre-conference reading material, there exist two distinct schools of thought. One of these is the "continuing quality assurance model" and the other the "triggers and markers model."

Proposals being given consideration by some professions are periodic re-testing, personal portfolio and/or self-assessment submissions with renewal applications, supervisory observation reporting, peer reviews and tighter specifications for continuing education credits. We will publish information on how to access the final report from the conference as soon as it is available to us.

I hope this information will stimulate some dialogue. Let us hear from you on this important topic.

Honored and Humbled. ♦

The Makings of a Complaint

Have you ever wondered how the Board takes and processes complaints? One of the Board's duties is to take complaints in writing from the public or other licensed social workers. There is actually a complaint application form that must be completed. It's available on-line at www.abswe.state.al.us or we can mail one to people interested. We must have the complaint form completed and signed; otherwise we cannot accept the complaint. The person filing the complaint must identify himself or herself for the Board to investigate the complaint. We average about 10 complaints a year which doesn't sound like a lot but it can be very time consuming especially for the Board Member to whom the complaint is assigned, and expensive for the Board paying for the Private Investigator's services and expenses. The following are the steps we take when a complaint is received:

- The complaint is logged in on the computer with a assigned complaint number
- A certified letter is sent to the licensee along with a copy of the complaint allowing them the opportunity to respond within 15 days
- A copy of the complaint and the response (should one be received) is forwarded to the Committee appointed. The Committee consists of the Board Member selected (selection of the Board Member is on a rotation basis), the Executive Secretary, and the Board's Legal Advisor from the Attorney General's Office
- The Board Member looks over the complaint and the response (if one was made available) and makes the recommendation to the Committee on what steps to follow
- If there is adequate evidence to continue the Board Member determines if the complaint should be forwarded to the investigator, or if a violation was obvious and an agreement is possible between the licensee and the Board
- The Board Member may determine that there are no grounds to continue, in which case a letter is sent to both the licensee and the person filing the complaint that the complaint is being closed for the lack of violation according to the Administrative Code
- If a violation is found and an agreement is proposed on the complaint, a copy of the agreement is sent to the licensee to sign and return. The agreement is not complete until the entire Board has the opportunity to see the complaint and vote on its acceptance or denial. If the agreement is accepted the violation is reported to DAR (Disciplinary Action Reporting System) who in turn reports for the Board to HIPPA (Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank)
- If the Board Member on the committee determines that additional information is needed to continue with the investigation the complaint is forwarded to the investigator on contract with the Board
- The Investigator will interview the person filing the complaint, the employer (if the licensee was practicing within an agency) and any other person listed as a witness. After this the investigator interviews the licensee. At the conclusion of the interviews the investigator will write a report of the findings and submit it to the committee.
- If after reviewing the report the committee feels evidence exists to file charges against the licensee a certified and first class letter is sent to the licensee outlining the charges and allowing them again the opportunity to respond to the charges.
- Should the response require additional investigation then the investigator is assigned to look into the case again
- If the charges go unanswered or the

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New Licensee's

New LBSW's

LGSW's Cont.

3785B	CORNELISON	ROBIN		MAY 2003	MILTON	1745G	CARTWRIGHT	MOLLY	E	JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3786B	FULTZ	CAROLYN	S	MAY 2003	PRATTVILLE	1746G	HIGEY	RACHEL		JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3787B	THOMPSON	ADRIENNE		MAY 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1747G	LAMB	KRISTAL	D	JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3788B	WOODSON	NATASHA	M	MAY 2003	TUSCALOOSA	1748G	MBOMA	DORIS	K	JUN 2003	ADELPHI
3789B	MEAD	AMY	O	MAY 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1749G	ROBIN	ALICE	C	JUN 2003	TUSCALOOSA
3790B	BOYKIN	PAMELA	C	MAY 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1750G	WEDGE	JANICE	C	JUN 2003	OXFORD
3791B	MCKINNON	ANNA	F	MAY 2003	FLORENCE	1751G	SCROGGINS	CRYSTAL	R	JUL 2003	ALABASTER
3792B	MOSIER	BEATRICE	C	MAY 2003	AUBURN	1752G	DAVIS	L LAUREN		JUL 2003	HOOVER
3793B	SCOTT	GLYNDA	A	MAY 2003	FLORENCE	1753G	GODWIN	MELISSA	A	JUL 2003	MONTGOMERY
3794B	WERTHER	ECKART		MAY 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1754G	PRESCOTT	TINA	R	JUL 2003	WINFIELD
3795B	DEAN	DARLA	V	JUN 2003	DAPHNE	1755G	ANDERSON	DWAN	S	JUL 2003	FAYETTE
3796B	GORDON	STEPHANIE	C	JUN 2003	FYFFE	1756G	BOSWORTH	MARTHA	S	JUL 2003	HUNTSVILLE
3797B	HOGAN	BETHANY	S	JUN 2003	CULLMAN	1757G	WILLIAMS	ANGELA	L	JUL 2003	MOBILE
3798B	MOSJIDIS	CHRISTINA	Z	JUN 2003	NOTASALGA	1758G	COTTON	JENNIFER	M	JUL 2003	NORTHPORT
3799B	SHARPERSON	DARNELL		JUN 2003	HARVEST	1759G	STEVENS	FRIEDA	A	JUL 2003	GREENVILLE
3800B	VICKERY	AMBER	D	JUN 2003	HACKLEBURG	1760G	BELL	EMILY		AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3801B	CRAWFORD	IANTHIA	G	JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1761G	HUFFMAN	KRISTY	A	AUG 2003	TUSCALOOSA
3802B	GARD	KATHLEEN	N	JUN 2003	OPELIKA	1762G	KATTUS	ERIN	E	AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3803B	SMITH	KEWANA	J	JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1763G	SCOTT	SARAH	E	AUG 2003	TUSCALOOSA
3804B	SORTER	CYNTHIA	A	JUN 2003	GUNTERSVILLE	1764G	WADE	HOLLY	A	AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3805B	SISK	STEVEN	B	JUN 2003	HUNTSVILLE	1765G	CROFT	LATOSHA	D	AUG 2003	ANNISTON
3806B	WAUGH	RANDI		JUL 2003	MONTGOMERY	1766G	HARRISON	CHRISTY	L	AUG 2003	WARRIOR
3807B	HILL	LARRY	V	JUL 2003	PELHAM	1767G	LANKFORD	VALENDIA	M	AUG 2003	SARALAND
3808B	CORNELIUS	AMANDA	B	JUL 2003	DORA	1768G	HELMER	HEIDI		AUG 2003	MOBILE
3809B	HAWKINS	ROBYN	D	JUL 2003	MONTGOMERY	1769G	MCCARTY	RUTH	A	AUG 2003	BREWTON
3810B	WILSON	LORI	S	JUL 2003	FULTONDALE	1770G	McLENDON	SHELLEY	L	AUG 2003	MOBILE
3811B	LINDSEY	LINDSEY	U	JUL 2003	HUEYTOWN	1771G	DANIELS	ELLEN	D	AUG 2003	HOMEWOOD
3812B	SANDERSON	MICHELLE		JUL 2003	HUNTSVILLE	1772G	FLEMING-BROWN	JACQUELINE		AUG 2003	SEMMES
3813B	WAITES	DANIELLE	C	JUL 2003	SYLACAUGA	1773G	HALL	COURTNEY	W	AUG 2003	MONTGOMERY
3814B	MORROW	CANDICE	S	JUL 2003	MAPLESVILLE	1774G	HAMPTON	TARAE	B	AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM
3815B	PATRICK	CHIUQUITA	A	JUL 2003	TUSKEGEE	1775G	TANNER	DORANN	W	AUG 2003	CALERA
3816B	BAILEY	BERNITA	L	AUG 2003	MONTGOMERY	1776G	WOOD	TERINA	C	AUG 2003	COTTONDALE
3817B	BONAM	JENNIFER	L	AUG 2003	ANDALUSIA	New LCSW's					
3818B	DART	BAILEE	E	AUG 2003	ANNISTON	1771C	NUSS	CRYSTAL	L	MAY 2003	MOBILE
3819B	FIELDS	JEAN	R	AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1772C	POUNTAIN	PHYLLIS	J	MAY 2003	SCOTTSBORO
3820B	JONES	JESSIE		AUG 2003	ANNISTON	1773C	MCKINNEY	REBECCA	L	JUN 2003	TUSCALOOSA
3821B	JUSTICE	JANET	E	AUG 2003	GARDENDALE	1774C	PHILLIPS	APRIL	L	JUL 2003	MADISON
3822B	WHEATON	KATHERINE	M	AUG 2003	PHENIX CITY	1775C	SPRINGFIELD	JASON	M	JUL 2003	VESTAVIA HILLS
3823B	BARRETT	JENNIFER	P	AUG 2003	AUBURN	1776C	CUDE	LESLIE	H	AUG 2003	DOTHAN
3824B	BARRON	DANIELLE	H	AUG 2003	JASPER	1777C	DANIELS	CHARLOTTE		AUG 2003	DELROSE
3825B	POWERS	TIFFANY	A	AUG 2003	BIRMINGHAM	1778C	COBB	YDRICKA	L	AUG 2003	TUSCALOOSA
3826B	SMITH	TIFFANI	N	AUG 2003	ANNISTON	1779C	STRAIT	CANDACE	L	AUG 2003	FLORENCE
New LGSW's						1780C	LACEY	PATRICIA		AUG 2003	CARIBOU
1737G	WHITE	ALLISON		MAY 2003	WETUMPKA	New PIP's					
1738G	HETRICK	JEFFERY	L	MAY 2003	ATMORE	0635-1707C	PACK, ANGELA		MAY 2003	OWENS CROSS RDS	
1739G	WALLACE	BARBARA	A	MAY 2003	NORTHPORT	0636-1742C	PANKEY, GLORIA N		MAY 2003	ALBERTVILLE	
1740G	BOREN	KAREN	E	JUN 2003	BIRMINGHAM	0637-0341C	GRIFFITH, DENNIS W		JUN 2003	DECATUR	
1741G	FAZELI	JACKIE	E	JUN 2003	TUSCALOOSA	0638-1580C	ROMANOWSKI, MARILYN M		JUN 2003	HUNTSVILLE	
1742G	ROBBINS	DONNA	M	JUN 2003	PACE	0639-1731C	SMITH, CHRYSTAL J		JUN 2003	COLUMBUS	
1743G	TURNER	KENNETH		JUN 2003	TUSCALOOSA	0640-1748C	STEPLIGHT, CLARISSA		JUN 2003	PHENIX CITY	
1744G	WHITT	RANDY		JUN 2003	SOUTHSIDE						

additional investigation brings no new grounds for charges a hearing date is set for the licensee to appear before the full Board and a certified and first class letter is sent to the licensee along with another copy of the charges explaining their rights

- If the additional investigation brings new charges to the complaint then the charges are sent to the licensee by certified and first class mail allowing them the opportunity to respond again
- If after a hearing the licensee is found guilty a report is made to DARS with ASWB (Association of Social Work Boards) who in turn 30 days after the finding reports for the Board to HIPPA
- The Board also will post the violation on their web site at www.abswe.state.al.us listed under "Disciplinary Actions" after the 30 day period
- If the licensee is found not guilty then the complaint is closed. Letters are mailed to both the licensee and the person filing the complaint informing them that the complaint has been closed and no further action will be taken.
- A complaint that is not substantiated against a licensee is **not** considered public record. It is maintained in the Board's office but is not available to the public and is not a part of the licensee's file. However, when a licensee is found to be guilty as charged their complaint is considered public record and becomes part of the licensee's file in the Board office and is available to interested parties. ♦

TEST YOUR ETHICS

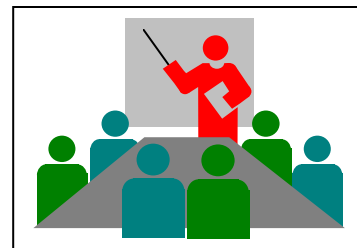
provided by NASW

A child protective services worker must present recommendations to the court regarding placement for the 10- and 12-year-old daughters of a recently deceased lesbian mother. Since their separation five years ago, the mother's former lesbian partner has paid monthly child support and all medical and dental costs for the girls. She has also maintained positive relationships with the girls and their mother, visiting regularly and taking the children on vacations. She and the mother had an unwritten understanding that the former partner would become the guardian for the children should something happen to the mother. The biological father maintains only occasional contact with the girls and has arranged for a few visits to his mother and sister. The father and mother were never married. The social worker favors placing the girls with their father because of her religious convictions in which homosexuality is considered immoral.

Please review NASW Ethics Code 1.02; 1.01; 1.03c; 1.05b,c; 1.14; 4.02; 4.06a; 5.01b; 6.01

Commentary:

Although the children are not of an age to make a final decision regarding with whom they will reside, their preference still must be sought and weighted. Limitations in their self-determination should not relate to a social worker's preference for heterosexual environments, a value she may hold as a private individual but which should be distinguished from her professional position. The girls have grown up with lesbian parental figures, and the social worker's competence should encompass and understanding of such. Social justice issues are inherent in the development of a plan for these youngsters and an optimal environment for them. The social worker's recommendation to the judge is likely to be a significant factor in the outcome for the young clients. (Copyright 1998, National Association of Social Workers, Inc., Current Controversies in Social Work Ethics: Case Examples) more on page 6



CE OPPORTUNITIES

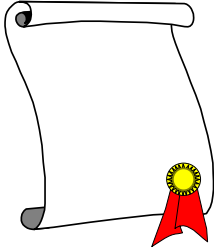
Did you know you could get **FREE CE** from the Alabama Department of Public Health's web site? It's open to the all Alabama residents, go to www.adph.org and select "News/Information" then select "Satellite Conferences" from the dropdown menu. This will give you the list of programs being offered. You can also register on line. Free is good check it out!

Agape

Is having a conference Oct 16-17, 2003 in Huntsville at the Huntsville Marriott. The theme of the conference is "**Keeping Children Safe in an Unsafe World**". 13 hours of training can be earned for both days and 6.5 hours for each day. Fees are \$85 for both days and \$45 for the individual days. Lunch is included. For more information contacts 256/734-6720 or register on line at: www.alccc.org

2nd Biennial Southeast Regional Conference

On Family Support will be held October 28-30, 2003, at the Birmingham Sheraton Hotel. This conference is sponsored by the Corporate Foundation for Children and FACTS, and is co-sponsored by Family Support America. Instilling Hope and Support for the Future of Families is the theme of this year's conference. Pre-registration \$300 on site \$350 1 day is \$125 on site \$175. To get more information and the registration materials, please contact the Corporate Foundation for Children office at 334-262-5993, or by email to michelle@cfckids.com.



OUR SUNSET REVIEW

Every year the Examiners of Public Accounts reviews and reports to the Sunset Committee their findings on Boards and Commissions. This year it was the Board of Social Work Examiners turn. The Examiner conducted our Sunset review during the month of April 2003 and our Sunset Hearing was scheduled for August 7th. Many of you as licensees received a letter from the Examiners asking various questions about your contact with our agency. This is a common practice of the Examiners to be sure that the Board is performing its duties and functions and carrying out our responsibilities to you the licensee and to the public. We thank those of you that had the time to reply to their letters and questions. We realize that this takes you away from your own busy schedules.

A good benefit to having a Sunset Audit and Hearing is that it gives the Board the opportunity to address issues it feels deserves attention in the Code of Alabama pertaining to the Social Work Laws. The Board wrote it's own recommendations and presented them to the Examiners in aspiration that someone on the Committee would take an interest and

sponsor the recommendations for the Board before Legislature. Unfortunately no one seemed to be interested in our recommendations except for one. It has been apparent for some time that the terms of our Board members have all grouped together and will be causing some problems for the Board in the future. There can be a point of time that the Board will be completely turned over with no senior members to lead and direct with experience. We could be left with a Board on which all the Members have less than one year of experience.

Experiencing a Sunset Hearing can be humbling, especially if the Board had numerous findings by the Examiners. Fortunately for us we only had the one, pertaining to the present composition of the Board terms which the Board has no control over. All seven Members of the Board were present during the Sunset Hearing, which I believed impressed the Committee. They seemed genuinely interested and very complimentary of the Board on their attendance.

The other recommendations made by the Board other than the request to correct the composition of the Board Members terms were:

- Addressing the electronic practice of social work.
- Experience requirements for the PIP Licensure.
- The right to deny an exam application for reasons other than lying on an application.
- And the requirement to

obtain the LGSW licensure before applying for the LCSW.

We realize all of these recommendations will not be widely accepted by some but are direly needed to assure that the quality of social work practice is sustained.

As of this writing there has not been a sponsor for these recommendations and we don't know if one will even appear. So none of these changes are in effect and we don't know if they ever will be. This is only provided to you to let you know where the Board is looking and what their goals are.

Some other issues the Board is addressing and will hopefully have ready to place on the table early next year are Privileged Communications, the Ability to Diagnose, and Regulating Continued Competence. These are big issues and after some research it was determined Alabama is one of the few States that the Social Workers at the Clinical Level did not have these privileges. In fact we're one of three states that do not have the Privileged Communication protection and one of twenty-one states without the Ability to Diagnose. The latter will be a big issue and most likely a fight if it ever comes about. We are currently getting copies of other States that have the privileges and looking at the language of their laws to see if we can use any of them to help facilitate the same in Alabama. We'll have more on the issue later. ♦

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Resources for Taking Control of Compassion Fatigue

Caring for others is a special gift and this gift can become damaged. The damage is known by several names to include compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious traumatization. It is important to practice self-care so that we can continue to use this gift in the service of our clients. There are several good resources that help us practice self-care. Becoming informed is one starting place. Two very good books on this topic are *Compassion Fatigue*, edited by Charles R. Figley, Ph.D. 1995, Brunner/Mazel and *Psychological Trauma and the Adult Survivor*, I. Lisa McCann, Ph.D. and Laurie A. Pearlman, Ph.D., 1990, Brunner/Mazel. Another resource is the workbook, *Transforming the Pain*, Karen W. Saakvitne and Laurie A. Pearlman, 1996, W.W. Norton & Company. ♦

Test Your Ethics Part II

A clinical social worker is helping a female client work through residual problems related to sexual abuse by her father many years earlier. The client had been removed from the home for a period, and her father had gone to treatment. The client's father is a third-grade teacher, and the client strongly suspects that he may be molesting children in his class. The

client is unwilling to contact the child protect services (CPS) or to confront her father. The social worker shares his client's concern about the father's access to children but is uncertain about the client's clear preference to not report her concerns or evidence to CPS and whether he has any responsibility to report.

Please review NASW Ethics Code 1.01; 1.02; 1.03a; 1.07c,d,e

Commentary

In this example, the clinical social worker's responsibility to the larger society and his legal obligations to report this potential molestation of children must take precedence over this client's clear preference not to report. The social worker should, however, weigh the strength of the client's evidence. Because the client has been in treatment, she probably has been made aware that the social worker is obligated under law to report the suspicions, and she may be discussing her concerns because she is searching for someone to do the reporting. All clients, including returning clients, need to be informed that state laws mandating the reporting of child physical and sexual abuse limit confidentiality. A consent form including this information and other policies should be presented to and discussed with a client at the beginning of service delivery.

These ethical dilemmas are from the NASW booklet: Current Controversies in Social Work Ethics: Case Examples available from NASW for \$12.99. Their order number is 1-800-227-3590.

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